

SERENDIPITY IN THE USE OF HEMI-SYNC® WITH MULTIPLE, ANXIETY-RELATED SYMPTOMS: A CASE DISCUSSION

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Introduction

In my general clinical/health psychology practice I use a comprehensive, multifaceted psychotherapy approach that includes the following components:

1. Cognitive psychotherapy for assisting the patient to establish a more realistic, less "catastrophic" attitude toward the problems in life in order to produce fewer reasons for excessive anxiety.
2. Regular use of Hemi-Sync tapes for training the patient to achieve more easily the alpha and theta states which are useful in behavioral psychotherapy through the process of "reciprocal inhibition," wherein these brain-wave states inhibit the presence of anxiety. A variety of METAMUSIC tapes is provided the patient to avoid any boredom that might develop from listening to the same tape on every occasion.
3. Finally, I create a symptom-specific tape with my verbal suggestions geared to combat the individual symptoms of the patient.

This comprehensive approach has worked most effectively with a variety of diagnostic categories such as panic states, nightmares and night terrors, phobias, chronic pain, and the customary emotional stresses that accompany most organic health problems and usually contribute to their severity.

Case Discussion

Recently, I began therapy with a patient with multiple, anxiety-related symptoms that included a phobia for public speaking, secondary (nonorganic) sexual impotence, and intense repressed anger involving an adult, mentally retarded son. The patient also suffered from prostatitis, which often required him to rise to urinate at least four or five times per night.

The cognitive restructuring component focused on reviewing his most habitual, longstanding symptom, namely the fear of public speaking. As a retired, very successful international industrialist, he was often asked to make oral presentations. His fear of this process began in his South American homeland, where all academic examinations—from grade school throughout college—were administered orally. In his opinion, the greatest disgrace was to be forced to say “I don’t know” in public when asked an examination question.

At the initial therapy session, the patient was provided with several different METAMUSIC[®] tapes and was fully oriented to the rationale for their use and to what positive results might be expected.

Serendipity

Even before the final step (introduction of the customized systematic desensitization tape related to public speaking) several symptoms were alleviated. First, the patient found that, while he still has his prostate condition, he now must arise only once or twice a night for urination. In addition, he has almost normal frequency of urination during the daytime. Next came an event that pleasantly shocked the patient: he was able to consummate sexual intercourse with his wife with no difficulty!

Apparently both of these symptoms became sharply reduced, not only because of the overall therapeutic atmosphere and process, but more specifically because the Hemi-Sync tapes reduced the patient’s generalized anxiety level very quickly and qualitatively better than the psychotropic drugs that he had been taking. The most logical interpretation is that these tapes help the mind-body unity to return much closer to homeostasis, the ideal state of mental and physical equilibrium.

These changes were accomplished in only seven therapy sessions. More importantly, with this modern, electronic sound component, patients can continue their therapy at home between sessions. Thus, their ultimate improvement not only makes them feel better physically and emotionally but also serves to supply what may be the highest form of self-actualization: I have helped make myself better through my own efforts and empowerment.”

At this point, the patient and I hopefully await comparable improvement in his fear of public speaking. Neither of us, however, has any serious doubts that similar improvement will occur, although it may take a bit longer to modify that habitual form of behavior.

[Addendum: Approximately six months after submitting this account, Dr. Haggerty reported an additional symptom remission. Evidently the patient had suffered from hypertension for most of his adult life. After beginning to use Hemi-Sync, he discontinued his medication without informing his physician or Dr. Haggerty for several months. He discovered, and his doctor has confirmed, that his blood pressure has remained normal since then, without medication.]

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